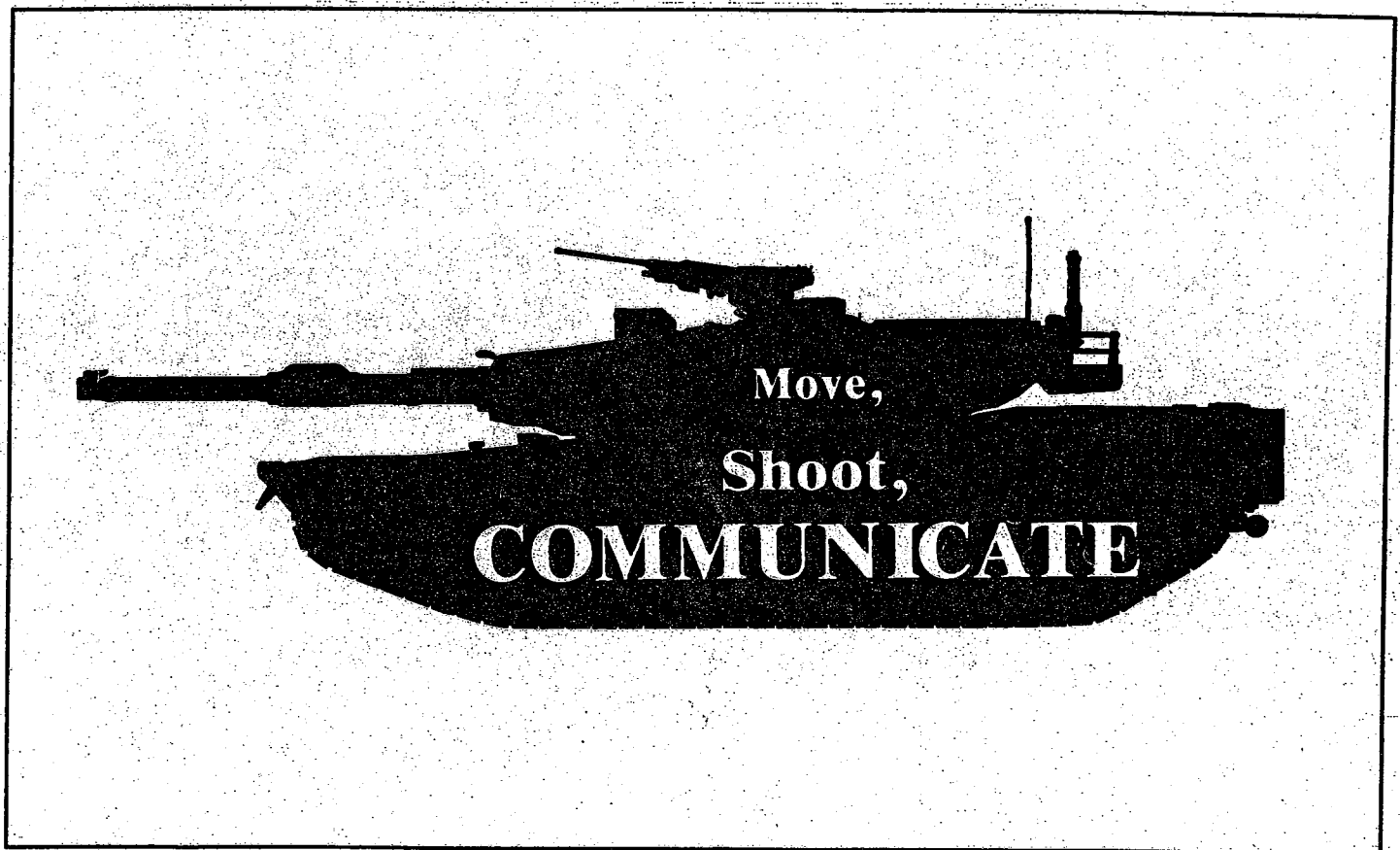


THE ARMY WRITING PROGRAM



**U.S. ARMY ARMOR CENTER
FORT KNOX, KENTUCKY 40121-5000
OCTOBER 1991**

ARMY WRITING: TASK, CONDITIONS, STANDARDS

Writing is just like any other military task. You perform a writing TASK under certain CONDITIONS to achieve established STANDARDS.

TASK

Following the six-step writing process, write a military paper to inform, persuade, request, instruct, counsel, etc.

CONDITIONS

The conditions for writing are often tough. You're very busy, under great pressure, and on a deadline.

STANDARDS

1. The Army's Definition of Effective Writing:

"Effective Army writing transmits a clear message in a single, rapid reading and is generally free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage. Good Army writing is concise, organized, and right to the point."

-- AR 25-50, Preparing and Managing Correspondence

2. The Standards of the Army Writing Style per AR 25-50:

- a. Mostly Short Words. A maximum of 15 percent long words of three or more syllables.
- b. Short Sentences. An average sentence length of 15 words.
- c. Short Paragraphs. Paragraphs that are less than 1 inch deep (roughly six lines of type or 75 words long).
- d. Short Papers. Papers no more than two typed pages long.
- e. The Bottom Line Up Front. The main idea--the instructions, request, recommendation, or summary of key points--at the beginning.
- f. Active Writing. Sentences mainly in the active voice.
- g. Correct, Complete, and Credible Writing. Generally free of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, mechanics, and word choice.

3. The Proper Formats for Army Memorandums and Letters per AR 25-50.

4. The Correspondence Rules per AR 25-50 and the U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual.

EFFECTIVE ARMY WRITING:
TASK - CONDITIONS - STANDARDS

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We thank the U.S. Army Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for allowing us to use material from its Effective Army Writing Book.

CHAPTER 1: YOUR WRITING TASK

THE SIX-STEP WRITING PROCESS

Writing is a sequence of events.
To ensure success, follow this
six-step writing process:



1. Understand your writing task and your writing conditions.
Pinpoint the communications problem and your purpose in writing.
Assess your writing conditions.
Picture your reader.
2. Gather and organize your ideas through mindmapping and outlining.
Mindmap your thoughts; jot many quick notes on a blank page.
Conduct research to get more information, if needed.
Write a detailed outline that puts your ideas in a logical order.
3. Write a rough draft.
Following your outline, package your information into a draft.
Express your ideas in plain English that's alive!
4. Edit your draft ruthlessly so it meets the Army's standards for writing.
First, review the content for meaning, accuracy, and completeness.
Next, revise the style for readability and tone.
Then, repackage your paragraphs.
Next, check the spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
Then, read it aloud (as if to your intended reader).
Last, set it aside for a while, and then revise it again.
5. Fight for feedback.
Have your office mates read it.
Get their honest opinions.
Then revise your work again.
6. Go final and proof it.
Write a neat final copy.
Check it carefully!

"Learning to write well is a lifelong endeavor."

—General John A. Wickham Jr.

Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND YOUR WRITING TASK AND WRITING CONDITIONS

The first step in effective writing is to understand clearly the task ahead of you and the conditions under which you'll perform it.

1. First, pinpoint the communications problem you face and your purpose in writing. These are the most common communications problems you face and the most common reasons for writing.

a. The Need to Save Information. If you have data or ideas you must preserve, you can write to record them in a Memorandum For Record or After-Action Report, for example.

b. The Need to Transmit Information. If you know something and need to tell others, you can write to inform them about it in an Information Memorandum or a Letter, for example.

c. The Need to Issue Instructions or Orders. If you require subordinates to do something, you can write to instruct or to order them to do it through a Memorandum of Instruction, a Standing Operating Procedure, or an Operations Order, for example.

d. The Need to Make Requests or Recommendations. If you want others to do something, you can write to ask or to recommend them to do it through a Request Memorandum, a Decision Paper, or a Staff Study, for example.

e. The Need to Change Attitudes, Opinions, and Behavior. If you need to alter the attitudes, opinions, or behavior of others, you can write to persuade them to change. You can choose a Recommendation Memorandum, a Counseling Form, a Memorandum of Reprimand, or other documents, depending on the situation.

f. The Need to Inspire People. If you need to uplift or motivate others, you can write to inspire them. A Letter of Encouragement, a Memorandum of Congratulations, or a Counseling Statement are possible ways to do this.

g. The Need to Clarify Your Ideas. If you don't know exactly where you stand on an issue, you can write to sort out your beliefs. By writing your philosophy of leadership or your policy on an issue, for example, you can clarify your position.

2. Assess your writing conditions. Determine your deadline and any obstacles you face (conflicting duties, etc). Plan to deal with them. (See page 2-1.)

3. Picture your reader. Consider his situation--his needs, desires, and reading conditions. (See page 2-2.)

SAMPLE WRITING TASK AND CONDITIONS

1. SITUATION. Imagine that you are assigned to the Operations Office of a combat battalion and you have the following conversation with the officer in charge--the Operations Officer (S3).

S3: I just came back from a meeting at brigade headquarters and found out more information about the field exercises scheduled for this winter. One of the major points of discussion was preparing our soldiers and equipment for the cold temperatures we expect to encounter.

YOU: Is it true that we'll be out at probably the coldest time of the year?

S3: That's right. As a result, we need to get the company commanders started on training their soldiers for the cold. The commanders are all fairly new to this part of the country, so they may not realize the importance of this topic yet.

YOU: I understand, sir.

S3: I've been on many winter exercises with this battalion and, if there's one thing I've learned, we have to harden our soldiers to the expected conditions of winter battle. Besides, we need to observe how our equipment holds up in the cold, too.

YOU: I agree with that.

S3: With all that in mind, I want you to write an informal memorandum to the company commanders telling them to start cold weather training as soon as possible. Mention what I've just said, and point out their main reference--FM 21-11, First Aid For Soldiers. Make 1LT Frosty our office point of contact on this matter. Do you have any other projects that will interfere with writing this for me today?

YOU: No, sir. When do you need it?

S3: Have it ready for my signature by 0800 tomorrow.

2. ANALYSIS.

a. In this short discussion, you have received the key information needed to prepare the document. Underlined above are the communications problem you face, the topic and key points, the intended audience, the signer, the deadline, and the format.

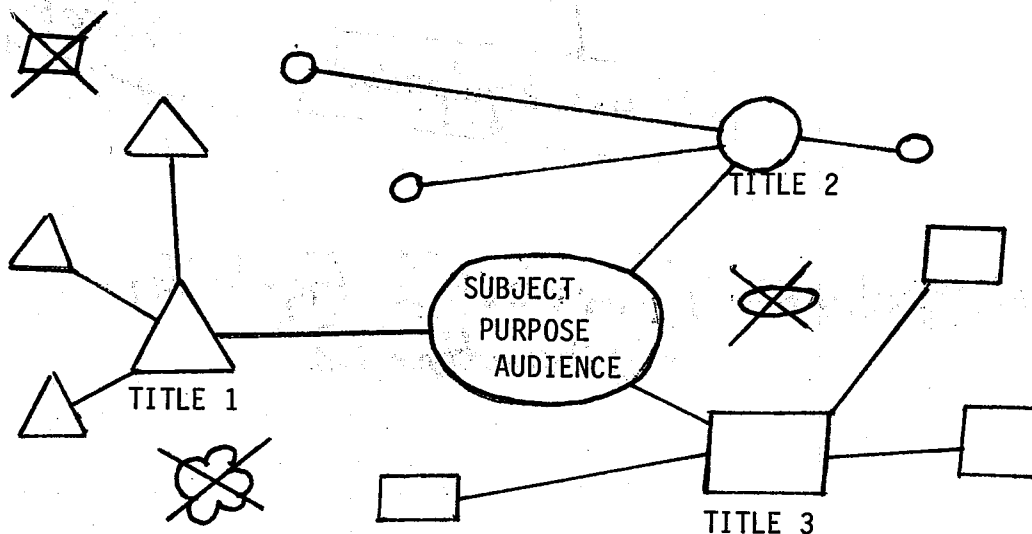
b. Now that you understand your writing task and writing conditions, you are ready to perform the remaining steps in the writing process: create a mindmap and outline, write a rough draft, edit the draft, get feedback, and write the final product.

STEP 2: GATHER AND ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION
THROUGH MINDMAPPING AND OUTLINING

The hardest thing to do in writing is to start writing. But the worst way to start is to just start writing. The best way to start is to think through your subject and organize your ideas. To do so, follow the mindmapping and outlining techniques below.

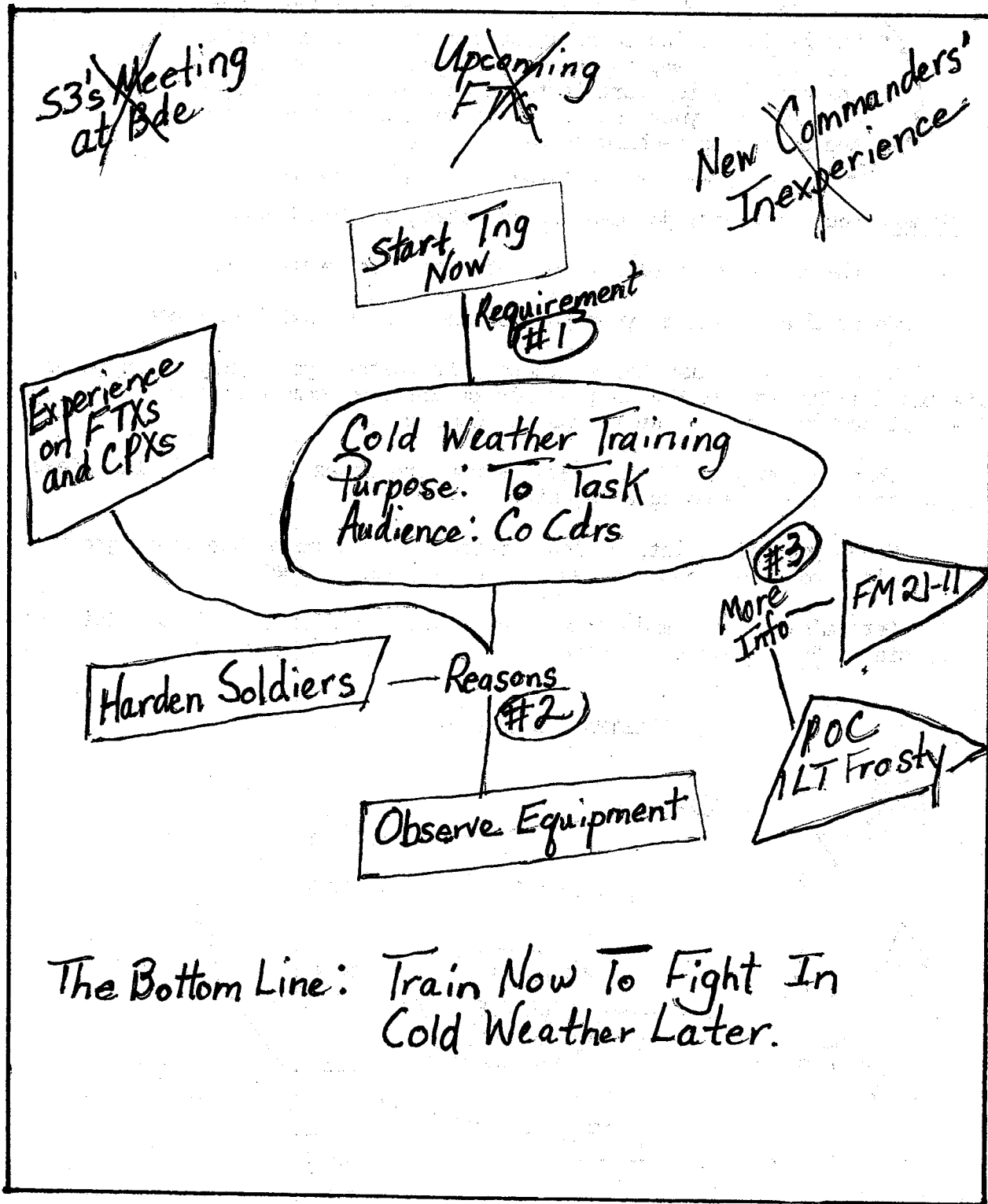
1. Mindmap your thoughts; jot many quick notes on a blank page.
 - a. In the middle of a blank piece of paper, write your subject.
 - b. Under that, identify your purpose and your intended audience.
 - c. Then, for at least three minutes, brainstorm your subject on paper. Write brief notes as quickly as possible on whatever comes to mind. Capture all your thoughts, even if you're unsure about them.
 - d. Then, group your ideas. Draw connecting lines between similar ideas to group them into more manageable units.
 - e. Group your ideas into at least three, but not more than five, groups. Assign a title to each group. Cross out any unrelated ideas.
 - f. Determine the one main idea that emerges from your mindmap. This is your thesis or "bottom line." Write it out as a complete sentence.

ILLUSTRATION OF MINDMAPPING



THE BOTTOM LINE: The main idea emerging from \triangle , \bigcirc , and \square .

SAMPLE MINDMAP



2. Conduct research to get more information, if needed.
3. Write a detailed outline that puts your ideas in a logical order.
 - a. From your mindmap, identify your major ideas.
 - b. Under each major idea, list all supporting ideas.
 - c. For each supporting idea, list facts, examples, or illustrations that clarify it.
 - d. Write all outline entries as complete sentences (or as sentence fragments).

An outline is a working plan of what you want to say and in what order. While tough to do, it's your best insurance your ideas will be complete, logical, and well-organized. It's well worth your time and effort.

ILLUSTRATION OF OUTLINING

SUBJECT:
PURPOSE:
AUDIENCE:

THE BOTTOM LINE:

1. MAJOR IDEA #1.
 - a. SUPPORTING IDEA #1 FOR MAJOR IDEA #1.
 - (1) FACT, EXAMPLE, OR ILLUSTRATION #1 FOR SUPPORTING IDEA #1.
 - (2) FACT, EXAMPLE, OR ILLUSTRATION #2 FOR SUPPORTING IDEA #1.
 - b. SUPPORTING IDEA #2 FOR MAJOR IDEA #1.
 - (1) FACT, EXAMPLE, OR ILLUSTRATION #1 FOR SUPPORTING IDEA #2.
 - (2) FACT, EXAMPLE, OR ILLUSTRATION #2 FOR SUPPORTING IDEA #2.

ADD OTHER SUPPORTING IDEAS, FACTS, EXAMPLES
AND ILLUSTRATIONS IF AVAILABLE.

2. MAJOR IDEA #2.

FOLLOW THIS PATTERN AS LONG AS NEEDED TO
COVER ALL YOUR IDEAS.

REMEMBER: IF YOU HAVE AN "a" OR A (1),
YOU NEED A "b" OR B (2).

SAMPLE OUTLINE

SUBJECT: COLD WEATHER TRAINING

PURPOSE: TO TASK

AUDIENCE: CO CDRS

THE BOTTOM LINE: START NOW TO
TRAIN FOR COLD WEATHER

1. REQUIREMENT. START NOW!

2. REASONS.

- a. Our Experience on FTXs + CPXs.
- b. The Need to Harden Soldiers.
- c. The Need to Observe Equipment.

3. SOURCES OF INFO.

- a. FM 21-11.
- b. 1LT FROSTY.

STEP 3: WRITE A ROUGH DRAFT

Having gathered and organized your thoughts, you should then write a complete rough draft. As you do, you should package your ideas, express them in plain English, and prefer active writing. But don't worry about mistakes. You'll fix them later as you edit your paper.

1. Following your outline, package your ideas into a draft.

● Packaging is the Army's approach to arranging ideas on paper for a quick reading. It makes your paper eye-catching and easy to read. The goal is to help your busy reader understand, within 30 seconds, what he must know and do.

- a. Write a precise title.
- b. State your purpose--why you're writing the document. If it's already clear from the title, omit it.
- c. Then state your main point, followed by supporting information.
- d. Follow it with your supporting information (reasons, details, etc).
- e. Write short, well-organized paragraphs throughout.
- f. Keep the paper short (one or two typed pages) and in the right format.

2. Use plain English that's alive!

- a. Use your natural voice. Write with the words you use every day.
- b. Be personal and conversational. Use personal pronouns. Use contractions if they're comfortable.
- c. Rely on short, precise, concrete words to form sharp images in the reader's mind.
- d. Write short sentences. Don't bury your ideas in long-winded ones.

3. Prefer the active voice over the passive voice. Active writing is shorter, livelier, and more direct than passive writing.

- a. To write actively, stress the doer (not the receiver) of the action in the sentence. Put the doer of the action before the verb.
- b. For more information on active writing, see pages 3-10 and 3-11.

SAMPLE DRAFTS

VAGUE, WORDY, PASSIVE, NOT PACKAGED

ANALYSIS

This headquarters has discovered through its experience on innumerable field training and command post exercises the primary importance of training in cold weather conditions. It is, moreover, vital for personnel and units to be trained in cold weather conditions so as to "harden" soldiers to the anticipated conditions of winter battles. This training also facilitates the observation of the operational readiness and performance of MTOE equipment in cold-weather temperatures. As such, it is imperative that your command undertake extensive cold weather training initiatives without further or undue delay. Applicable references include FM 21-11, First Aid for Soldiers. The Point of Contact in the Operations (S3) Office is 1LT Frosty.

Wordy, vague writing

Passive writing

Poor packaging:

No clear title
No clear purpose
Main point buried
Deep paragraph
No subparagraphs
No headers
Wrong format

Conclusion:

The writer didn't follow his outline.

THOUGH POORLY WRITTEN, THIS DRAFT IS STILL COMPLETE.
THE WRITER HAS A PRODUCT HE CAN LATER EDIT CAREFULLY.

CLEAR, CONCISE, ACTIVE, WELL-PACKAGED

ANALYSIS

SUBJECT: Cold Weather Training

Clear, concise paper

1. Reference. FM 21-11, First Aid for Soldiers.

Active Writing

2. Requirement. Start cold weather training now to ensure success in winter combat later.

Good packaging:

Clear title
Clear purpose
Main point up front
Paragraph headers
Subparagraphs
Short paragraphs
One short page.
Correct format

3. Reasons. Our experience on many FTXs shows that units need to--

a. Harden soldiers to the expected conditions of winter battle.

b. Observe how equipment holds up in the cold.

4. POC. 1LT Frosty, Operations Office, 1-5555.

BY FOLLOWING A GOOD OUTLINE CAREFULLY,
YOU CAN WRITE AN EXCELLENT DRAFT QUICKLY.

STEP 4: EDIT YOUR DRAFT RUTHLESSLY

Check your work against the standards of the Army writing style as discussed in Chapter 3.

Review your paper at least four times—for meaning, for style, for packaging, and for correctness.

Use a marking pen to highlight your mistakes. But don't make corrections until you mark up the whole paper.

1. First, review the content for meaning, accuracy, and completeness.
2. Next, review the style for readability and tone.
 - a. Mark the wordy expressions. Expect to cut 30 percent of your words without affecting the meaning of your ideas. See page 3-5 for more on this.
 - b. Compute a Clarity Index and Reading Grade Level. See page 3-6.
 - c. Mark the weak passive sentences. See pages 3-10 and 3-11.
3. Then, check the packaging of ideas.
 - a. Mark the long paragraphs over 1 inch deep (roughly six lines of type or 75 words long).
 - b. Look for ways to create subparagraphs and lists if appropriate.
 - c. Make paragraph headings more precise.
 - d. Polish your "bottom line" statement, and make sure it's up front.
4. Next, review the paper for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.
5. Then, read it aloud (as if to your intended reader).
6. Last, review your work, set it aside for a while, and then revise it again.

Avoid wasting time by merely recopying your work. Mark up your paper thoroughly and make corrections. Then recopy.

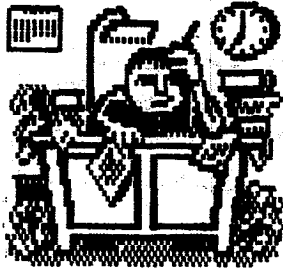
A QUICK EDIT
OF AN INFORMAL MEMORANDUM

ANALYSIS

We have
~~This headquarters~~ has discovered through
its/our ~~its~~ experience on ~~innumerable~~ *many* field training
and command post exercises the ~~primary~~
importance of training in cold weather ~~conditions~~.
It is, moreover, vital for personnel and units to
be trained in cold weather ~~conditions~~ *so as* to
"harden" soldiers to the anticipated conditions of
winter battles. This training also facilitates
the observation of the ~~operational~~ readiness and
~~performance~~ of MTOE equipment in cold weather
temperatures. *As* such, it is imperative that ~~you~~ *you*
~~command~~ *start* undertake extensive cold weather training
initiatives without further or undue delay. *soon/now*
Applicable references include FM 21-11, First Aid
for Soldiers. *The* Point of Contact in the
Operations (S3) Office is 1LT Frosty.

No clear title or purpose
Impersonal wording
Misspelled word
Too many long words
Long sentence
Sentence stretcher
Weak passive verb
Needless repetition
Grammar error
Jargon
Misspelled word
Sentence stretcher
Main point buried
Impersonal wording
Format error:
References go up front.

Packaging Errors
No clear title
No clear purpose
Long paragraph
No paragraph headers
No subparagraphs
Format error



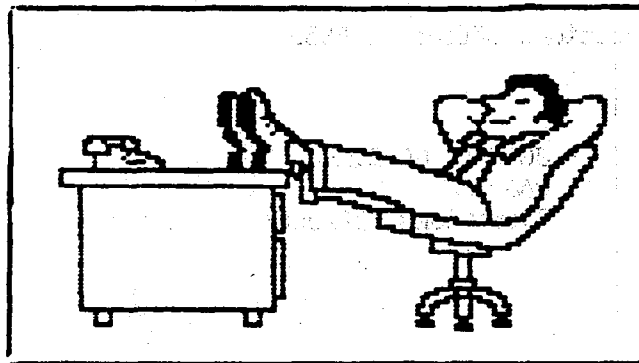
STEP 5: FIGHT FOR FEEDBACK

1. Have office mates read it.
2. Ask for their honest opinions.
3. Then revise your work again.

STEP 6: GO FINAL AND PROOFREAD IT

1. Write a neat final copy.
2. Check it carefully!

(Now hope for the best!)



Of all the arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well.
--John Sheffield

Sir,
Here's the
memo you
asked me
to write.
- CPT Jones

ABCD-A

24 Oct 89

MEMORANDUM FOR Company Commanders

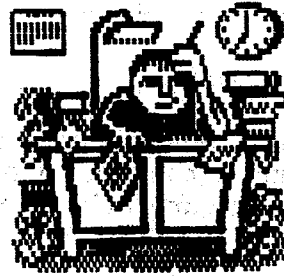
SUBJECT: Cold Weather Training

1. Reference. FM 21-11, First Aid for Soldiers.
2. Requirement. Start cold weather training now to ensure success in winter combat later.
3. Reasons. Our experience on many FTXs shows that units need to--
 - a. Harden soldiers to the expected conditions of winter battle.
 - b. Observe how equipment holds up in the cold.
4. POC. 1LT Frosty, Operations Office, 4-5555.

JOHN D. GOODTRAINER
MAJ, AR
Operations Officer

THE TYPICAL WRITER

The typical writer often works under very tough conditions.



1. Workload Stress and Time Pressure.
He's often very busy, under pressure, and on a tight suspense.
2. Lack of Information/Excess of Information.
Either he may lack the ideas or data to discuss the topic fully, or he may have an overload of complex information to summarize.
3. Uncertainty.
He may not be sure of the emphasis or tone his boss wants.
4. Fear and Frustration.
He may fear writing for a boss who is very picky and unsupportive.
He may be frustrated from having his work kicked back.
5. Aversion to the Task.
He may dislike writing because of past difficulties or weak skills.

FIVE REASONS WHY PEOPLE HATE TO WRITE

1. Writing is very time-consuming.
Speaking is much quicker.
2. It's mentally tiring.
Coming up with ideas is very hard work.
3. It's imprecise.
A written message's content and tone may be misinterpreted.
4. It opens the writer to criticism.
Errors in grammar, spelling, logic, etc are on permanent display.
5. It's frustrating.
Finding the exact word to express a thought can be a real struggle.

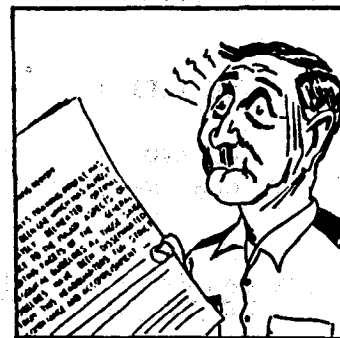
HOW THE ARMY WRITING STYLE HELPS THE WRITER

1. The Army style simplifies writing and requires less polished skills.
2. It saves time by promoting concise writing.
3. It lowers anxiety by letting the writer be himself, not someone he's not.

CONDITIONS

THE TYPICAL READER

Your reader probably can't devote the time and attention to reading your paper as carefully as you'd like. Expect the worst.



1. Workload Stress and Time Pressure.
Like you, he is very busy and under pressure.
He wants to be able to read your paper quickly.
2. Information Overload and Interference,
He has many different papers to read.
He may have distractors (visits, calls) that interrupt his reading.
3. Conflicting Information.
He may have information that contradicts yours.
4. Bias.
He may have preconceived notions about your topic—or you!
5. Short Attention Span.
He may not be able to focus for long without drifting.

FIVE REASONS WHY PEOPLE HATE TO READ

1. Reading is time-consuming.
A verbal message would be quicker.
2. It's mentally tiring.
Reading complex information for very long is hard work.
3. It's imprecise.
A written message is open to varying interpretations.
4. It contains distractors.
Errors or quirks in style distract the reader from the ideas.
5. It sometimes brings bad news or requires him to do something.
A message may interrupt the reader's peaceful status quo.

HOW THE ARMY WRITING STYLE HELPS THE READER

1. A paper in the Army style is easier to understand.
2. It's quicker to read.
3. It gives a clearer picture of the real person behind the writing.

ADVICE TO WRITERS

Follow these principles of effective communications to make your job easier.

1. Write only when it makes sense.
Writing is often a chore. What's worse, it can be inefficient, time-consuming, and stressful. So avoid it. Don't write unless you have to. Use the phone instead.
2. If you must write, have a clear purpose.
Pinpoint exactly why you're writing.
Is it to explain something? Is it to ask for something?
Is it to give orders or advice? Is it to answer a question?
Make sure you know why you're writing—and your reader knows!
3. Get your ideas straight before you write.
Gather your thoughts and organize them before communicating.
4. Get your message across quickly—in 30 seconds or less.
Tell your reader right away what he needs to know and why it's important. Like you, he's busy, under pressure, and easily distracted. Don't waste his time. Package your ideas for a quick reading.
5. Write with your reader in mind.
Tailor your message to his needs and his reading abilities.
6. Write to express your ideas, not to impress someone.
Write to draw attention to your message, not to yourself.
Come across as a sensible person who knows that plain English is best.
7. Write the way you speak.
Isn't writing just a substitute for saying something in person?
So imagine your reader is in front of you. Then talk to him.
Be personal. Don't hide behind a bureaucratic mask.
If you're writing for someone else's signature, adopt his tone.
8. Watch out for interference that confuses your message.
Be aware that other messages may distract the reader from yours.
Consider the underlying messages in your writing.
9. Check your work before you send it out.
Consult with others before you communicate.
Coordinate your papers ahead of time with staffs and units affected.
Resolve disagreements at the lowest level.
10. Follow up on your communications.
Check to see that your message got through.
Fight for feedback from your intended reader.

ADVICE TO THE SUPERVISORS OF WRITERS

You're important to the quality of writing in your organization. You play a big role in the development of good writers and the conditions under which they work. Those are serious responsibilities.

1. Help your writers. Discuss these points for every writing project:
 - a. Topic, key points, and desired tone.
 - b. Purpose.
 - c. Intended audience.
 - d. Signer.
 - e. Length and format.
 - f. Suspense date.
2. For major projects, have writers submit their outlines before they start a draft. Then you can see if they're on the right track before getting too far into the assignment.
3. Encourage your writers to use the Army style.
 - a. Tell them you want plain English.
 - b. Don't force your personal style and "pet" expressions on them.
 - c. Set a good example in your own writing.
4. Review correspondence carefully. Ask yourself these questions:
 - a. Does it meet the reader's needs?
 - b. Is the tone proper?
 - c. Is the main point clear?
 - d. Is it credible, well-supported, and organized?
 - e. Is it concise?
 - f. Is it generally free of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, mechanics, and usage?
5. Don't nit-pick your writers. Suggest changes and let the writers make them. Give reasons for major changes.

THE ARMY'S DEFINITION OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

"Effective Army writing transmits a clear message in a single, rapid reading and is generally free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage."

"Good Army writing is concise, organized, and right to the point."

--AR 25-50, Preparing and Managing Correspondence



THE SEVEN STANDARDS FOR ARMY WRITING

AR 25-50 sets specific standards for effective writing:

1. Mostly Short Words. A maximum of 15 percent long words of three or more syllables.
2. Short Sentences. An average sentence length of 15 words.
3. Short Paragraphs. Paragraphs that are less than 1 inch deep (roughly six lines of type or 75 words long).
4. Short Papers. Papers that are no more than two typed pages long.
5. The Bottom Line Up Front. The main idea of the paper up front.
6. Active Writing. Sentences mainly in the active voice.
7. Correct, Complete, and Credible Writing. Generally free of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, mechanics, and word choice.

A MEMORY AID FOR THE SEVEN STANDARDS

15	15 percent long words (maximum)
15	15 words per sentence (average)
1	1 inch deep paragraphs (most of the time)
2	2 typed pages per paper (maximum)
BLUF	Bottom line up front (always)
ACTIVE	Active Writing (most of the time)
FOES	Free of errors (generally so)

STANDARDS

STANDARD #1: MOSTLY SHORT WORDS

1. Use mostly short words (the ones you use every day in conversation).

- a. Use plain English that's alive!
- b. Prefer precise, concrete words rather than abstract ones.
- c. Use more personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, we, they, us, them).
- d. Try some contractions (I'm, you're, can't, won't).

ABSTRACT: Your signature on this correspondence is mandatory.

CONCRETE: You must sign Block 8 of DA Form 2411.

IMPERSONAL: This headquarters requires a response from your office.

PERSONAL: We need your reply.

2. Look for and replace the long words in your writing.

- a. Mark the long words (three or more syllables). Example:
installation

- b. Substitute shorter words with the same meaning. (See pages 3-3 & 3-4.)

- c. Limit the long words to 15 percent of your total.

STUFFY: Utilize the appropriate form.

BETTER: Use the correct form.

3. Eliminate confusing jargon, cliches, and doubletalk.

WEAK

to plus up

downsized

civilian residence

It's a non-starter

mission accomplishment

incomplete success

STRONG

to increase

smaller

home

It won't work.

success

failure

4. Eliminate legalese. It's outdated.

WEAK

herewith enclosed is

It is incumbent on you to

STRONG

here's

You must

5. Break up the long strings of modifiers and nouns—HUT-2-3-4 Phrases.

WEAK: High Cost Area Allowance Report

BETTER: Report on Allowances for High Cost Areas

SIMPLER WORDS AND PHRASES

Official writing does not demand big words or fancy phrases. Write naturally—the way you speak in conversation.

Instead of	Try
accompany.....	go with
accomplish.....	carry out, do
accomplish (a form).....	fill out
accordingly.....	so
accrue.....	add, gain
accurate.....	correct, exact, right
achieve.....	do, make
actual.....	real
*additional.....	added, more, other
adjacent to.....	next to
advantageous.....	helpful
*advise.....	recommend, tell
affix.....	put, stick
afford an opportunity.....	allow, let
aircraft.....	plane
anticipate.....	expect
a number of.....	some
apparent.....	clear, plain
appear.....	seem
appreciable.....	many
appropriate.....	proper, right
approximately.....	about
as a means of.....	to
ascertain.....	find out, learn
as prescribed by.....	under
*assist, assistance.....	aid, help
attached herewith is.....	here's
attempt.....	try
at the present time.....	now
benefit.....	help
by means of.....	by, with
cannot.....	can't
capability.....	ability
category.....	class, group
close proximity.....	near
combine.....	join
comply.....	follow
component.....	part
comprise.....	form, include, make up
concerning.....	about, on
conclude.....	close, end
concur.....	agree

Instead of	Try
confront.....	face, meet
consequently.....	so
consolidate.....	combine, join, merge
constitutes.....	is, forms, makes up
construct.....	build
contains.....	has
continue.....	keep on
contribute.....	give
cooperate.....	help
currently.....	(leave out)
deem.....	think
delete.....	cut, drop
demonstrate.....	prove, show
depart.....	leave
designate.....	appoint, choose, name, pick
desire.....	wish
determine.....	decide, figure, find
develop.....	grow, make, take place
disclose.....	show
discontinue.....	drop, stop
disseminate.....	issue, send out
do not.....	don't
due to the fact that.....	due to, since
echelons.....	levels
effect.....	make
elect.....	choose, pick
eliminate.....	cut, drop, end
employ.....	use
encounter.....	meet
encourage.....	urge
endeavor.....	try
ensure.....	make sure
enumerate.....	count
equitable.....	fair
equivalent.....	equal
establish.....	set up, prove, show
evaluate.....	check, rate, test
evidenced.....	showed
evident.....	clear
examine.....	check, look at
exhibit.....	show
expedite.....	hurry, rush, speed up
expeditious.....	fast, quick
expend.....	pay out, spend
expense.....	cost, fee, price
explain.....	show, tell

Instead of	Try
*facilitate.....	ease, help
factor.....	reason, cause
failed to.....	didn't
fatuous numbskull.....	jerk
feasible.....	can be done
females.....	women
final.....	last
*finalize.....	complete, finish
for example.....	such as
forfeited.....	give up, lose
*for the purpose of.....	for, to
forward.....	send
function.....	act, role, work
fundamental.....	basic
furnish.....	give, send
has the capability.....	can
herein.....	here
*however.....	but
identical.....	same
identify.....	find, name, show
immediately.....	at once
impacted.....	changed, hit
implement.....	carry out, do, follow
*in accordance with.....	by, under
in addition.....	also, besides, too
in an effort to.....	to
inasmuch as.....	since
inception.....	start
in conjunction with.....	with
incorporate.....	blend, join, merge
incumbent upon.....	must
indicate.....	show, write down
indication.....	sign
initial.....	first
initiate.....	start
in lieu of.....	instead of
in order that.....	for, so
*in order to.....	to
in regard to.....	about, concerning, (
interpose no objection.....	don't object
in the amount of.....	for
in the course of.....	during, in
in the event that.....	if
*in the near future.....	soon
in view of.....	since
in view of the above.....	so
*it is.....	(leave out)
it is essential.....	must

Instead of	Try
it is recommended.....	I/we recommend
it is requested.....	please
justify.....	prove
legislation.....	law
limited number.....	few
limitations.....	limits
locate.....	find
location.....	place, scene, site
magnitude.....	size
*maintain.....	keep, support
majority.....	most
maximum.....	greatest, longest, most
minimize.....	decrease, lessen, reduce
modify.....	change
monitor.....	check, watch
nebulous.....	vague
necessitate.....	cause, need
*notify.....	let know, tell
numerous.....	many, most
objective.....	aim, goal
obligate.....	bind, compel
observe.....	see
obtain.....	get
operate.....	run, work
operational.....	working
*optimum.....	best, greatest, most
option.....	choice, way
participate.....	take part
perform.....	do
permit.....	let
personnel.....	people, staff
pertaining to.....	about, of, on
place.....	put
portion.....	part
position.....	place
possess.....	have, own
preclude.....	prevent
prepared.....	ready
*previous.....	earlier, past
previously.....	before
prioritize.....	rank
prior to.....	before
probability.....	chance
procedures.....	rules, ways

Instead of	Try
proceed.....	do, go on, try
proficiency.....	skill
programmed.....	planned
promulgate.....	announce, issue
*provide.....	give, say, supply
provided that.....	if
provides guidance for.....	guides
(the) provisions of.....	(leave out)
purchase.....	buy
reason for.....	why
recapitulate.....	sum up
reduce.....	cut
reflect.....	say, show
regarding.....	about, of, an
relating to.....	about, on
relocation.....	move
remain.....	stay
remainder.....	rest
remuneration.....	pay
render.....	give, make
request.....	ask
require.....	must, need
requirement.....	need
*retain.....	keep
return.....	go back
review.....	check, go over
selection.....	choice
similar.....	like
solicit.....	ask for
state.....	say
*subject.....	the, this, your
subject to.....	may be
submit.....	give, send
subsequent.....	later, next
subsequently.....	after, later, then
substantial.....	large, real, strong
sufficient.....	enough
take appropriate measures.....	please
terminate.....	end, stop
that.....	(leave out)
*therefore.....	so
there are.....	(leave out)
there is.....	(leave out)
thereof.....	its, their
this office.....	us, we
time period.....	(either one)
transmit.....	send

Instead of	Try
transpire.....	happen, occur
type.....	(leave out)
until such time as.....	until
(the) use of.....	(leave out)
*utilize, utilization.....	use
validate.....	confirm
value.....	cost, worth
verbatim.....	word for word, exact
via.....	in, on, through
viable.....	workable
warrant.....	call for, permit
whenever.....	when
whereas.....	since
with reference to.....	about
with the exception of.....	except for
witnessed.....	saw

*among the most overworked

STANDARD #2: SHORT SENTENCES

1. Write short sentences.

- a. Keep most sentences between 12 and 20 words, and average around 15.
- b. Keep sentences to what you can say aloud in one breath.
- c. Keep them to less than two lines of type.

2. Avoid smothered verbs. Use short action words.SMOTHERED

make a decision

give a call to

conduct an inspection

provide information to

give assistance to

UNSMOTHERED

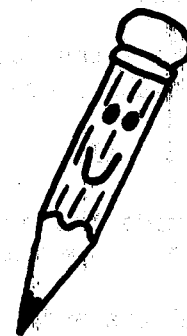
decide

call

inspect

inform/tell

assist/help

3. Avoid doublings. Don't be repetitious.REPETITIOUS

His duties and responsibilities

Please review and comment

The importance and significance of . .

BETTER

His duties

Please comment

The significance of

4. Cut out these sentence stretchers: "It is," "There is," and "There are," "that," and "which."WORDY

It is required that you attend the class.

There is a meeting for them tonight.

There are many solutions to the problem.

His plan is the one that we support.

He took the SQT, which was given today.

BETTER

You must attend the class.

They must meet tonight.

The problem has many solutions.

His plan is the one we support.

He took the SQT given today.

5. Shorten all wordy expressions. (See pages 3-3 and 3-4.) Cut about 30 percent of the wording from your drafts.

WORDY: Since we all have a tendency to be wordy, we can probably cut approximately 30 percent of the words in a first draft without really affecting the meaning to any serious extent.

BETTER: Since we tend to be wordy, cut 30 percent of your first draft. It probably won't affect the meaning much.

6. Ask questions occasionally for emphasis.

THE CLARITY INDEX

Rules #1 and #2 (Use mostly short words and write short sentences) help ensure the clarity of your writing. Using the formula below, you can measure the clarity of your work. Your goal is to achieve a 10th to 12th grade reading level.

1. Choose a sample of about 200 words.
2. Count the sentences.
3. Divide the number of sentences into the total number of words. The result will be the average length of your sentences.
4. Count all long words (three syllables or more).
5. Divide the number of long words by the total number of words. The result will be the percentage of long words.
6. Add the average sentence length to the percentage of long words. The sum is your clarity index.
7. Multiply the Clarity Index by a conversion factor of 0.4 to get the Reading Grade Level.

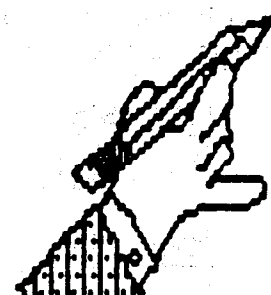
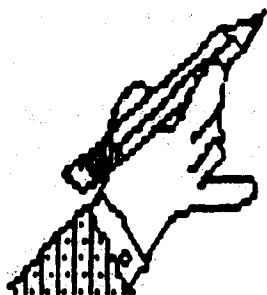
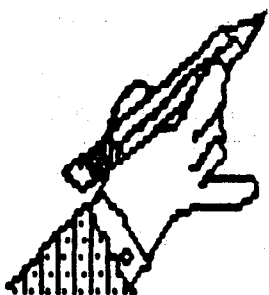
$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Clarity Index} \\ \times 0.4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Reading Grade Level

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Aim = 25 to 30 Clarity Index} \\ \times 0.4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Aim = 10th to 12th grade reading level
(That's what newspapers aim for.)

8. If your writing doesn't meet the aim, adjust the sentence length and number of long words.



STANDARD #3: SHORT PARAGRAPHS

1. Write short paragraphs that, with few exceptions, are not more than 1 inch deep (roughly six lines of type or 75 words long).
2. Start each paragraph with a good header and the key point.
3. Use subparagraphs and lists when possible.

SUGGESTED PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

- Sentence 1: Topic Sentence (the controlling idea of the paragraph).
Sentence 2: Explanation/elaboration of the topic sentence (if needed).
Sentence 3: Fact/example/illustration #1 to support the topic sentence.
Sentence 4: Fact/example/illustration #2 to support the topic sentence.
Sentence 5: Analysis (a sentence that answers the question "So what?").

BAD EXAMPLE

This headquarters has discovered through its experience on innumerable field training and command post exercises the primary importance of training in cold weather conditions. It is, moreover, vital for personnel and units to be trained in cold weather conditions so as to "harden" soldiers to the anticipated conditions of winter battles. This training also facilitates the observation of the operational readiness and performance of MTOE equipment in cold-weather temperatures. As such, it is imperative that your command undertake extensive cold weather training initiatives without further or undue delay. Applicable references include FM 21-11, First Aid for Soldiers. The Point of Contact in the Operations (S3) Office is 1LT Frosty.

GOOD EXAMPLE: ESSAY STYLE

Start cold weather training now to ensure success in winter combat later. Our experience on many FTXs shows that units need to prepare in advance. You need to harden your soldiers to the expected conditions of winter battle. You also need to observe how your equipment holds up in cold temperatures. For information, see FM 21-11, First Aid for Soldiers, or contact 1LT Frosty.

BETTER EXAMPLE: OUTLINE STYLE

1. Reference. FM 21-11, First Aid for Soldiers.
2. Requirement. Start cold weather training now to ensure success in winter combat later.
3. Reasons. Our experience on many FTXs shows that units need to--
 - a. Harden soldiers to the expected conditions of winter battle.
 - b. Observe how equipment holds up in the cold.
4. POC. 1LT Frosty, Operations Office, 1-5555.

STANDARDS

STANDARD #4: SHORT PAPERS IN THE RIGHT FORMAT

1. Write short staff papers (1 to 2 pages long) in the right format.
2. For long papers, write a short cover document and add enclosures.
3. Follow the right format per AR 25-50.
 - a. Use the informal memorandum format for informal, internal papers that stay within the unit, office, or agency.
 - b. Use the memorandum format for formal, external papers that stay within the Department of Defense.
 - c. Use the letter format for all official correspondence to civilians, family members, or soldiers by name. You may also use it for personal correspondence in any capacity as a soldier or Department of the Army civilian.
 - d. See Chapter 4 for a complete discussion of the formats.



STANDARD #5: THE MAIN POINT UP FRONT

1. First, create a clear, descriptive title.

SAMPLE TITLES

SUBJECT: Policy #1: Training
 SUBJECT: SOP #6: Maintenance Management
 SUBJECT: Request for Reissue of TA-50
 SUBJECT: Instructions for Running the M16 Rifle Range (10 Dec)

2. Then, announce your purpose for writing. If it's already clear from the title, omit this formal purpose statement.

SAMPLE PURPOSE STATEMENTS FROM MEMORANDUMS

Purpose. To tell you about the upcoming change to. . . .
 Purpose. To explain how we'll. . . .
 Purpose. To answer your question, "What is the . . . ?"

SAMPLE PURPOSE STATEMENTS FROM LETTERS

Dear Mr. Smith:
 I'm writing to tell you about

Dear Mrs. Jones:
 Thank you for

Dear Colonel Smith:
 Here's the answer to the question you asked about



3. Next, state your main idea (request, recommendation, requirement, answer, or a summary of key points).

MAIN POINT

Recommendation
 Request
 Answer
 Key Taskings
 Summary of Main Points

THEN SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Reasons
 Reasons
 Supporting Explanations
 Specific Required Actions
 Detailed Discussion of Ideas

If no single idea stands out, create one to keep from wandering aimlessly.

EXAMPLE: Here are your training quotas for FY 90:

EXAMPLE: I saw these strengths and weaknesses in your program:

4. After that, arrange your supporting information in short, organized paragraphs under clear, logical headings. (See page 4-3).

5. Last, use subparagraphs (list) when possible, to highlight your key information or instructions.

STANDARDS

STANDARD #6: ACTIVE WRITING

1. Know the difference between active and passive writing.

Active and passive writing are two ways of describing the same action.

Active: The tank is firing at the plane.

Passive: The plane is being fired upon by the tank.

Active writing emphasizes the doer--who did what to whom.

Passive writing emphasizes the receiver of the action.

2. Know how to spot active and passive sentences.

- a. Find the doer of the action. If it's up front, the sentence is active.

ACTIVE: The lieutenant is showing the general around the unit.

ACTIVE: The NCO will teach the maintenance class.

- b. Find the receiver. If it's up front, the sentence is passive.

PASSIVE: The general is being shown the training by the lieutenant.

PASSIVE: The class on maintenance will be taught by the NCO.

- c. Analyze the verb. A passive verb phrase always has these two parts: a form of the helping verb "to be" and any past participle.

PASSIVE = A FORM OF "TO BE" +

A PAST PARTICIPLE

am is are
was were
be been being

A verb that ends in -d, -n, or -t

Examples: picked, told, given,
shown, taught, hit

Note:

"will, has, have, had"
are not forms of "to be."

Note:

(A verb ending in "-ing" is)
(not a past participle.)

PASSIVE: I am required by the first sergeant to report by 0630.

am required = "To be" + Past Participle ending in -d

PASSIVE: It will be written by the clerk.

be written = "To be" + Past Participle ending in -n

PASSIVE: The truck was hit by the tractor.

was hit = "To be" + Past Participle ending in -t

Note. Passive writing isn't the same thing as writing in the past tense. It can describe action in the past, present, or future tenses.

3. Know the three ways to change passive sentences to the active.

- a. Put the doer up front. PASSIVE: The report was submitted by SGT Po.
ACTIVE: SGT Po submitted the report.
- b. Drop part of the verb. PASSIVE: The meeting was held at Fort Knox.
ACTIVE: The meeting was at Fort Knox.
- c. Change the verb. PASSIVE: He will be required to attend.
ACTIVE: He will have to attend.

4. Know how to tell good passive sentences from weak ones.

a. A passive sentence is WEAK—

- (1) If it's wordy and an active sentence would be shorter.

WEAK PASSIVE: If a vehicle is to be brought to the field, the team sergeant will ensure it is properly dispatched the day prior to going to the field.

REWRITTEN TO THE ACTIVE: On the day before a vehicle goes to the field, the team sergeant must ensure it has a proper dispatch.

- (2) If it's awkwardly worded and an active sentence would be simpler.

WEAK PASSIVE: Request is made that the 449th Engineer Battalion be exempted from commitments from 8 Mar to 7 Apr.

REWRITTEN TO THE ACTIVE: Please exempt the 449th Engineer Battalion from commitments from 8 Mar to 7 Apr.

- (3) If it omits the important doer.

WEAK PASSIVE: The report was submitted two days late.

REWRITTEN: 2LT Doe submitted his report two days late.

b. A passive sentence is OK—

- (1) If it's short, to the point, and clear as is,

GOOD PASSIVE: I was kept late by the teacher.

- (2) If the doer isn't important or you want to emphasize the receiver of an action.

GOOD PASSIVE: I was commissioned in 1987.

GOOD PASSIVE: PV2 Doe was counseled by SFC Smith.

STANDARDS

STANDARD #7: CORRECT, CREDIBLE, AND COMPLETE WRITING

1. Use correct spelling. Avoid misspelling these words, for example.

develop	receive	sergeant	lieutenant
personnel	morale	initiative	maneuver
battalion	maintenance	exercise	professional

2. Use proper punctuation. Avoid these common mistakes.

a. Comma Splice. Don't join two sentences with just a comma. Separate them with a period or a semicolon, or use a comma and conjunction (and, but, or, for, so, nor, yet).

WRONG: He fired the rifle, later he cleaned it.

RIGHT: He fired the rifle; later he cleaned it.

He fired the rifle. Later he cleaned it.

He fired the rifle, and later he cleaned it.

b. Comma Splice. Don't join two closely related sentences with only a comma and a conjunctive adverb (moreover, nevertheless, still, then, also, etc). Use a semicolon.

WRONG: He went to the meeting, however, he was late.

RIGHT: He went to the meeting; however, he was late.

c. Omitted Comma. Put a comma after an introductory clause.

WRONG: After he fired the new rifle he cleaned it.

RIGHT: After he fired the new rifle, he cleaned it.

d. Omitted Comma. Put a comma after a long introductory phrase of five or more words.

WRONG: After cleaning his new rifle he turned it in.

RIGHT: After cleaning his new rifle, he turned it in.

e. Unneeded Colon. Don't put colons after verbs, only after main clauses.

WRONG: His additional duties include: NBC Officer, Supply Officer, and Training Officer.

RIGHT: His additional duties include NBC Officer, Supply Officer, and Training Officer.

RIGHT: His additional duties include the following: NBC Officer, Supply Officer, and Training Officer.

Fewer words, fewer mistakes. --Chinese Proverb

3. Use correct grammar. Avoid these common mistakes.

a. Sentence Fragments. Don't write incomplete sentences. If you have an afterthought, attach it to the previous sentence.

WRONG: He's an excellent writer. Considered one of the best.

RIGHT: He's an excellent writer, considered one of the best.

b. Faulty Parallelism. When you create a list, don't break from the pattern of your wording or structure. Be consistent.

FAULTY: SGT Rock likes to fire rifles and running PT.

CORRECT: SGT Rock likes to fire rifles and to run PT.

FAULTY:

STRONG:

Traits of a good leader:

Traits of a good leader:

a. Knows his job.

a. Knows his job.

b. Cares for his men.

b. Cares for his men.

c. Effective communications.

c. Communicates effectively.

c. Needless Shifts. Don't switch tenses, mood, voice, person, number, or point of view without good reason.

FAULTY: The section cleaned its equipment and has stored its tools.

CORRECT: The section cleaned its equipment and stored its tools.

d. Faulty Agreement. Make the subject and its verb (and all pronouns and their antecedents) agree in number.

FAULTY: The list of NCOs going to Korea are on the bulletin board.

CORRECT: The list of NCOs going to Korea is on the bulletin board.

FAULTY: Each soldier must bring their records.

CORRECT: Each soldier must bring his records.

e. Misplaced emphasis. Arrange your ideas for greatest emphasis. Put conditions or qualifiers up front.

FAULTY: All personnel are required to submit a leave request by 3 December if they want to take Christmas leave.

BETTER: If you want to take Christmas leave, submit a leave request by 3 December.

STANDARDS

SEVEN RULES OF THE ARMY WRITING STYLE

Follow these seven rules to guide you in meeting the Army's writing standards.

1. Use mostly short words (the ones you use every day in conversation).
Use plain English that's alive!
Prefer precise, concrete words rather than abstract ones.
Use more personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, we, they, us, them).
Try some contractions (I'm, you're, can't, won't).
Keep long words (three or more syllables) to 15 percent of your total.
Avoid jargon, cliches, doubletalk, legalese, or HUT-2-3-4 phrases.
2. Write short sentences (about 15 words on average).
Keep most sentences between 12 and 20 words.
Cut out wordy phrases and repetition.
Avoid sentence stretchers (It is, There is, There are).
Ask questions occasionally for emphasis.
3. Write short paragraphs (no more than 1" deep or 75 words long).
Start each paragraph with the key point.
Give each paragraph a good header, if appropriate.
Use subparagraphs and lists when possible.
4. Write short staff papers (1 to 2 pages long) in the right format.
For long papers, write a short cover document and add enclosures.
Follow the right format:
 Informal memorandums for informal or internal actions.
 Memorandums for formal papers to military readers.
 Letters for official or personal correspondence to civilians.
5. Put the main idea ("the bottom line") up front.
First, create a clear, descriptive title (SUBJECT:).
Then, announce your purpose for writing (Purpose. To).
Next, state your main idea (request, recommendation, requirement, answer, or a summary of key points).
After that, arrange your supporting information in short, organized paragraphs under clear, logical headings.
Last, use subparagraphs (lists) when possible, so key info stands out.
6. Prefer active sentences over passive ones.
To be active, stress the doer of an action. (Joe ate a cake.)
To be passive, stress the receiver. (A cake was eaten by Joe.)
7. Be correct, credible, and complete.
Use correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and word usage.
Be thorough, factual, and logical.
Be neat and legible.

SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT ARMY WRITING



Myth Military writing requires formality.

Fact Not all military writing must be formal.

Does a memorandum to soldiers have to sound like a proclamation?
While an award should sound lofty, it doesn't have to be stiff.

Myth "I" and other personal pronouns don't belong in military writing.

Fact The regulation on Army writing says otherwise:

Use "I," "you," and "we" as subjects of sentences instead of
"this office," "this headquarters," "all individuals," and so
forth.

--AR 25-50, Preparing and Managing Correspondence

Myth The Army Writing Style forces me into an unnatural style of writing.

Fact The Army Writing Style lets you be yourself.

It says to write the way you'd speak to fit the
occasion/audience.

It calls for everyday words in everyday sentences.

Myth The Army Writing Style promotes childish "Dick and Jane" writing.

Fact Actually, the new style makes for forceful writing.

It helps you convey ideas in a clear, concise, direct manner.

It helps you write one clear page, not ramble on for five.

Myth The Army Writing Style contradicts what I learned in college English.

Fact The Army Writing Style is a business style. It's quite different.

College English taught you to write academic, literary essays to
impress teachers. But at work, you must write quickly to
transmit information to busy readers.

Myth The Army Writing Style results in staff work that's incomplete.

Fact The Army style requires that you be complete but as brief as you can.

You must avoid wordiness and repetition, not omit important
ideas.

Myth Army leaders don't really accept this new style.

Fact Actually, the leaders who understand this style strongly support it.

What they don't accept is sloppy thinking and weak writing.

They want accurate, complete staff work that gets results.

Besides, who wants wordy, pompous writing they must translate?

CHAPTER 4: FORMATS FOR MEMORANDUMS AND LETTERS

CORRESPONDENCE STYLE RULES

Follow these major style rules when preparing papers. For a complete discussion of all rules, consult these references:

AR 25-50, Preparing and Managing Correspondence.

AR 310-50, Catalog of Abbreviations, Brevity Codes, and Acronyms.

U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual.

1. Numbers. In most cases--	<u>RIGHT</u>	<u>WRONG</u>
Spell out numbers one to nine.	five NCOs	5 NCOs
Don't spell out 10 or higher.	10 SFCs	ten SFCs
Spell numbers that start sentences.	Twelve men worked.	12 men worked.
Don't spell out units of measurement, time or money.	4 inches	four inches
	2 hours	two hours
2. Military Dates and Times.	<u>RIGHT</u>	<u>WRONG</u>
Omit "hours."	0800	0800 hours
Abbreviate both month and year.	28 Aug 87	28 Aug 1987
<u>Or</u> spell out both month and year.	28 August 1987	28 August 87
3. Acronyms and Abbreviations.	<u>RIGHT</u>	<u>WRONG</u>
Omit apostrophes to form plurals.	five NCOs	five NCO's
Omit periods.	NBC OBC	N.B.C. O.B.C.
Use upper case.	SGT 1LT CPT	Sgt 1Lt Capt
		Cpt
Usually omit the hyphen.	S1, S2, G3,	S-1, S-2, G-3,
Abbreviate measurements.	lb, oz, in	pound, ounce,
		inch
Abbreviate the words "second" and "third."	2d, 3d	2nd, 3rd
Spell out acronyms the first time.	Post Exchange (PX)	(PX) Post Exchange
Don't use shortened forms of words in the body of correspondence.	as soon as possible	ASAP

THE MEMORANDUM

4. Paragraph Format.

List references (if any) first.
Double space all new paragraphs.
Use upper/lower case headers.
End headers with a period.
Put the main idea up front.

RIGHT

1. References.

2. Purpose.

3. Summary.

4. Strengths.

5. Weaknesses.

a. Training.

(1)

(2)

(a)

(b)

b. Maintenance.

WRONG

1. PURPOSE:

2. STRENGTHS:

3. WEAKNESSES:

4. SUMMARY:

5. REFERENCES:

(A.)

(B.)

(1.)

(a.)

(1)

Don't indent further than eight spaces.

Don't subdivide beyond this level.

If you have a subparagraph "a" or (1), add at least a "b" or (2).

THE USES OF MEMORANDUM

The Memorandum is used to correspond formally with any command, staff, or activity within the Department of Defense.

An Informal Memorandum is used to correspond informally with any command, staff, or activity within your same organization. Essentially, it's an internal, informal document.

A Letter is used to correspond officially with any civilians, family members, or soldiers by name. It can also be used to correspond personally but in an official capacity.

THE TYPES OF MEMORANDUMS

1. Information Memorandum. To inform, explain, announce, reply, etc.
2. Request Memorandum. To make requests.
3. Memorandum of Instruction. To issue instructions or orders.
4. Policy Memorandum or SOP. To announce policies and standing operating procedures (SOPs).
5. Decision Memorandum or Staff Study. To make recommendations.
6. Memorandum of Commendation (or Appreciation). To commend or to show appreciation to soldiers and Department of the Army civilians.
7. Memorandum of Reprimand (or Counseling). To reprimand and warn soldiers and Department of the Army civilians.
8. After-Action Report. To record the results, lessons learned, and recommendations from an event.
9. Memorandum For Record. To document conversations, meetings, or other events.
10. Memorandum of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. To document an agreement or understanding between two or more parties.
11. Personnel Action Memorandum. To start military and civilian personnel actions.
12. Transmittal Memorandum. To forward (as an enclosure) any non-transmitting forms that must go outside the post or command.

THE MEMORANDUM

PURPOSE	TYPE OF MEMORANDUM	SAMPLE PARAGRAPH HEADERS
To explain something	Information Memorandum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. References. 2. Purpose. 3. Summary. 4. Discussion (or Facts).
To ask for something	Request Memorandum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose. 2. Request. 3. Reasons. 4. Coordinating Instructions.
To task someone to do something	Memorandum of Instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. References. 2. Purpose. 3. Summary. 4. Responsibilities. 5. Coordinating Instructions.
To announce a policy	Policy Memorandum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. References. 2. Summary 3. Scope. 4. Details of the Policy.
To announce Standing Operating Procedures (SOP)	SOP Memorandum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. References. 2. Purpose. 3. Summary. 4. Scope. 5. Definitions. 6. Responsibilities. 7. Procedures. 8. Files.
To record data	Memorandum for Record	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose. 2. Summary. 3. Specifics.
To give an after-action report	After-Action Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose. 2. Recommendations. 3. Review of the Event. 4. Lessons Learned.
To recommend action to solve a simple problem with one obvious solution	Decision Memorandum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is a decision paper. 2. Purpose (or Problem). 3. Recommendation. 4. Reasons. 5. Effect on Resources. 6. Coordination.

To recommend a
course of action
on a complex issue
with two or more
feasible courses
of action

Staff Study
Memorandum

1. This is a decision paper.
2. Problem.
3. Recommendation.
4. Facts Bearing on the Problem.
5. Assumptions.
6. Courses of Action.
7. Analysis.
8. Conclusion.

Omit the purpose if it's clear from the title. Omit the references paragraph if there aren't any references. Reword the headers to suit your needs.

THE MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Organizational Name/Title
City, State, and Zip Code

S: Suspense Date (if any)

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS NUMBER)

Date of Signature

MEMORANDUM FOR Addressee's Duty Position or Name, Organization, City, State,
and Zip Code (All upper case or upper/lower case)

SUBJECT: Preparing a Memorandum

1. References. List references first and in the order they're discussed in the text. Identify them fully. Enclose references the reader doesn't have.

a. AR 25-50, 21 Nov 88, Preparing and Managing Correspondence, Chapter 2.

b. Publication Number, Date, Title.

c. Memorandum, Office Symbol, Date, subj: Title.

d. Meeting (or phone conversation) between Rank, Name, Organization, and Rank, Name, Organization, Date, subj: Title.

2. Purpose. To explain the format and style rules for the memorandum. (Use an infinitive to state the purpose of the paper. If obvious, omit it.)

3. Bottom Line Up Front. Put the bottom line (your request, recommendation, summary of key points, etc.) up front in a paragraph up to 75 words long.

4. Format for the Heading.

a. Letterhead. Use letterhead stationery for the first page. If it's not available, use plain bond paper (8-1/2 x 11 inches), one side only.

b. Office Symbol, MARKS Number, Suspense, and Date. Type in the OFFICE SYMBOL, Modern Army Record Keeping (MARKS) number, suspense date (if any), and the date of signature. (Use military style dates in memorandums.)

c. Address Line. List up to five addressees after "MEMORANDUM FOR." If more, write SEE DISTRIBUTION and list all of them after the signature block.

d. Subject Line. Identify your SUBJECT clearly.

5. Format for the Text.

a. Indentation. Indent all subparagraphs four spaces and begin typing on the fifth. Wrap all paragraphs and subparagraphs to the left margin.

OFFICE SYMBOL

SUBJECT: Preparing a Memorandum

- b. Margins. Keep 1-inch margins left and right.
- c. Spacing. Single space the text, and double space between paragraphs.
- d. Paragraphs and Headers. Separate each major section by using numbered paragraphs and lettered/numbered subparagraphs with clear headers.
- e. Subparagraphs.

(1) Balance. If you create an "a" subparagraph, you must also have at least a "b" subparagraph. If you have a (1), you must have a (2).

(2) Levels of Division.

(a) Don't subdivide paragraphs beyond the level of (a), (b), etc.

(b) Don't indent any further than eight spaces.

6. Continuing pages.

a. Headers. Put the OFFICE SYMBOL on line 8 of each continuing page. Below that, put the SUBJECT. Use the same wording as on page 1.

b. Page Number. Center the page number 1 inch from the bottom.

7. Authority Line. Use an AUTHORITY LINE ("FOR THE COMMANDER," "FOR THE DIRECTOR," etc.) if applicable.

8. Signature Block. Use upper case letters for the SIGNATURE BLOCK. Use acronyms for the RANK and BRANCH, or write them out in upper and lower case.

9. Enclosures. Number and attach enclosures in the order they appear in the text. Identify them in the text (Encl 1, Encl 2, etc.) and list them below.

10. Copies Furnished. List COPIES FURNISHED (CF) below the enclosures.

11. Point of Contact. If you have a point of contact (POC), list that person's rank, name, and telephone number in the last paragraph.

AUTHORITY LINE:

4 Encls

- 1. Memo, Office Symbol, Date, Title
- 2. DA Form, Date
- 3. FM #-##
- 4. AR #-##

NAME LINE

RANK, BRANCH (or Rank, Branch)
Duty Position

THE MEMORANDUM

DISTRIBUTION: (If you have six or more addressees.)

CF:

Duty Position, Unit

Duty Position, Unit

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
United States Army Armor School
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121-5200

ATSF-TP (1)

19 Feb 89

MEMORANDUM FOR Army Writers

SUBJECT: The Army Writing Style

1. Reference. AR 25-50, 21 Nov 88, Preparing and Managing Correspondence.
2. Purpose. To describe the Army's standards for effective writing and to explain the rules of the Army Writing Style.
3. Summary. Papers in the Army Writing Style are easy to understand in a single reading. They use short, everyday words in short, active sentences. Paragraphs are organized and right to the point. In fact, the whole paper is right to the point and tells readers only what they need to know.
4. The Standard for Effective Army Writing. AR 25-50 says effective writing communicates its message in a single rapid reading and is generally free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.
5. The Rules of the Army Writing Style. The Army Writing Style (established by AR 25-50) has seven rules:
 - a. Rule #1: Use mostly short, conversational words.
 - (1) Prefer short, everyday words--ones with one or two syllables. Limit long words to 15 percent of your total. To have more cuts down the clarity of your paper.
 - (2) Avoid jargon, technical terms, abbreviations, or acronyms your readers won't understand.
 - (3) Be conversational in your style. Use personal pronouns (I, you, we) and contractions (I'm, you're, can't). Write as you speak. After all, that's how readers think.
 - b. Rule #2: Write short sentences.
 - (1) Average no more than 15 words per sentence. If you don't, your reader's reading grade level has to be higher. Even if he's very smart, who wants to read at the top of his ability all day?
 - (2) Avoid writing any sentence with more than 20 words. Long-winded sentences make it hard for readers to stay with you.

ATSF-TP

SUBJECT: The Army Writing Style

c. Rule #3: Write short paragraphs. Keep each paragraph (or subparagraph) to 1 inch of single-spaced type. That's about 75 words or six typed lines.

d. Rule #4: Write short staff papers in the right format. Keep them to one page, no more than two, for routine actions. For complex correspondence, use a cover document and many short enclosures.

e. Rule #5: Put your bottom line (main point) up front.

(1) Put your main point--your summary, recommendation, response, or request--at the beginning. Don't make your readers guess where you're going.

(2) Put the main idea of each paragraph up front, too. Don't make your point a mystery to your readers.

(3) Package your paragraphs by using subparagraphs and lists. Break your information up into "bites" for easy understanding and easy reference later.

(4) Package also by using paragraph titles or headers. These force you to organize your information--to stick to your topic. They also help move the readers smoothly from one point to the next.

f. Rule #6: Prefer active sentences (like this one). Passive sentences (such as this one) should be avoided by you. Passive sentences add unnecessary words and tend to be awkward and vague. They often leave out who the doer is.

g. Rule #7: Be correct, credible, and complete. Be correct in your grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Be complete, accurate, and logical in your entire paper. If you aren't, your readers will think you don't know how, or worse, don't care.

6. Conclusion. Write papers for readers who are human and busy. That takes work since it's harder to write one clear, concise page than to ramble on for five.

LEMUEL J. CATO

LTC, IN

Communicative Skills Officer

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM

Note. This memorandum meets the seven rules of the style very well.

It has only 11 percent long words.

The sentences average 12 words long.

The paragraphs are all less than 1 inch deep.

The memorandum is just two pages long.

It has the key ideas up front.

It's in the active voice with a few good passive verbs.

It's free of errors in spelling, punctuation, format, etc.

THE INFORMAL MEMORANDUM

THE USES OF AN INFORMAL MEMORANDUM

The Informal Memorandum serves many of the same purposes as the Memorandum. But it may be used for correspondence internal to the headquarters, command, agency, etc.

S: Suspense Date (if any)

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS NUMBER)

Date of Signature

MEMORANDUM FOR Addressee's Duty Position or Name, Organization
(All upper case of upper/lower case)

SUBJECT: Preparing an Informal Memorandum

1. Reference. AR 25-50, 21 Nov 88, Preparing and Managing Correspondence, Chapter 2.

2. Uses. The informal memorandum has the same uses as the memorandum. But it is only for correspondence that stays within the command or organization.

3. Format.

a. The informal memorandum uses the same format as the memorandum but omits the letterhead.

b. The OFFICE SYMBOL, MARKS Number, and DATE OF SIGNATURE begin on the eighth line.

SIGNATURE BLOCK

RANK, BRANCH (or Rank, Branch)
Duty Position

INFORMAL MEMORANDUM

(no letterhead)

ABDC-E

5 December 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: In-progress Review for AGI

1. Plan to attend a meeting Monday, 12 December, to review the battalion's progress in preparing for the Annual General Inspection scheduled for March 1989.
2. We will meet from 0900-1030 in the battalion conference room.
3. Bring your AGI briefing books, and be ready to talk about preparations in your area. Keep your briefs to five minutes.
4. POC is Jerry Rock, 4-2222.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

PAUL X. PAULINS
Captain, AR
Adjutant

DISTRIBUTION:

Commander, 5-33 Armor
Executive Officer, 5-33 Armor
S1, S2, S3, S4, BMO, 5-33 Armor
CSM

THE LETTER

THE TYPES OF LETTERS

1. Official Letters. We use letters to conduct the Army's official business with civilians, family members, service members addressed by name, civilian agencies, and government agencies (federal, state, and local).

- a. Letter of Invitation.
- b. Letter of Welcome.
- c. Letter of Request.
- d. Letter of Inquiry.
- e. Letter of Reply.
- f. Letter of Commendation (by the organization).
- g. Letter of Appreciation (from the organization).
- h. Letter of Sympathy.

2. Personal Letters. We also use letters to conduct personal business when writing as individual soldiers or Department of the Army civilians.

- a. Letter of Introduction.
- b. Letter of Appreciation (from an individual, not the organization).
- c. Letter of Commendation (from an individual, not the organization).
- d. Letter of Encouragement.
- e. Letter of Reply.
- f. Letter of Inquiry.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Organizational Name/Title
City, State, and Zip Code

Civilian Date

Office Title

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Preparing a Letter

Name
Unit or Street Address
City, State, and Zip Code

Dear

Use letterhead stationery. If not available, type on plain bond paper, starting the letterhead three lines from the top of the page. Use upper case letters for DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY and upper and lower case for the rest of the letterhead.

Use civilian dates under the letterhead and throughout the letter.

Spell out the Office Title of the originating office. Add a SUBJECT line only if it serves a purpose. End the salutation ("Dear:" with a colon.

Start the text with an introductory paragraph that states your purpose in writing. Continue with body paragraphs that develop one central idea each. Start each body paragraph with a topic sentence. Make each paragraph flow smoothly. Provide suitable transitions. End with a concluding paragraph that wraps up your thoughts.

Indent the text four spaces, and begin typing on the fifth. Single space the text; double space between paragraphs. Keep 1 to 1-1/2 inch margins, left and right.

Spell out all acronyms, abbreviations, and brevity codes the first time. Don't use any in the address or signature blocks.

In the complimentary closing, write "Sincerely" and add a comma. In the signature block, use upper and lower case letters only. After the rank, put "U.S. Army." Indicate Enclosures two lines below the signature block.

THE LETTER

Leave at least a 1-inch margin at the bottom of the page. On continuing pages, center the page number 1 inch from the top. Use this form: -2- -3- -4-.

Sincerely,

Signature Block
Rank, U.S. Army

Enclosures

WELCOME LETTER

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 2d Battalion, 27th Armored Regiment
3d Armored Division (Spearhead)
APO New York 09079-1111

November 13, 1988

Second Lieutenant Fred Jones
Troop A, 2d Squadron, 12th Cavalry
2d Armor Training Brigade
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121

Dear Lieutenant Jones:

Welcome to the "Battering Rams" and the 3d Armored Division. I am happy to learn that you will soon become a member of this fine battalion.

The 2d Battalion, 27th Armored Regiment is an M1A1 equipped battalion in the 3d Brigade. We're located at Oberberg, approximately 20 miles due north of Frankfurt.

I am assigning Second Lieutenant Murray Graddison as your sponsor, and you should receive a letter from him shortly. If there is anything we can do to help make your move here smoother, please let us know.

I am looking forward to your becoming a member of the battalion. I trust you will find your tour of duty both personally and professionally rewarding.

Sincerely,

James B. Jensen
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Commanding Officer